

**§ 13.5 Claims involving criminal activities or misconduct.**

(a) The Administrator will refer cases of suspected criminal activity or misconduct to the EPA Office of Inspector General. That office has the responsibility for investigating or referring the matter, where appropriate, to the Department of Justice (DOJ), and/or returning it to the Administrator for further actions. Examples of activities which should be referred are matters involving fraud, anti-trust violations, embezzlement, theft, false claims or misuse of Government money or property.

(b) The Administrator will not administratively compromise, terminate, suspend or otherwise dispose of debts involving criminal activity or misconduct without the approval of DOJ.

**§ 13.6 Subdivision of claims not authorized.**

A claim will not be subdivided to avoid the \$20,000 limit on the Agency's authority to compromise, suspend, or terminate a debt. A debtor's liability arising from a particular transaction or contract is a single claim.

**§ 13.7 Omission not a defense.**

Failure by the Administrator to comply with any provision of this regulation is not available to a debtor as a defense against payment of a debt.

**Subpart B—Collection****§ 13.8 Collection rule.**

(a) The Administrator takes action to collect all debts owed the United States arising out of EPA activities and to reduce debt delinquencies. Collection actions may include sending written demands to the debtor's last known address. Written demand may be preceded by other appropriate action, including immediate referral to DOJ for litigation, when such action is necessary to protect the Government's interest. The Administrator may contact the debtor by telephone, in person and/or in writing to demand prompt payment, to discuss the debtor's position regarding the existence, amount or repayment of the debt, to inform the debtor of its rights (*e.g.*, to apply for

waiver of the indebtedness or to have an administrative review) and of the basis for the debt and the consequences of nonpayment or delay in payment.

(b) The Administrator maintains an administrative file for each debt and/or debtor which documents the basis for the debt, all administrative collection actions regarding the debt (including communications to and from the debtor) and its final disposition. Information from a debt file relating to an individual may be disclosed only for purposes which are consistent with this regulation, the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable law.

**§ 13.9 Initial notice.**

(a) When the Administrator determines that a debt is owed EPA, he provides a written initial notice to the debtor. Unless otherwise provided by agreement, contract or order, the initial notice informs the debtor:

(1) Of the amount, nature and basis of the debt;

(2) That payment is due immediately upon receipt of the notice;

(3) That the debt is considered delinquent if it is not paid within 30 days of the date mailed or hand-delivered;

(4) That interest charges and, except for State and local governments and Indian tribes, penalty charges and administrative costs may be assessed against a delinquent debt;

(5) Of any rights available to the debtor to dispute the validity of the debt or to have recovery of the debt waived (citing the available review or waiver authority, the conditions for review or waiver, and the effects of the review or waiver request on the collection of the debt), and of the possibility of assessment of interest, penalty and administrative costs; and

(6) The address, telephone number and name of the person available to discuss the debt.

(b) EPA will respond promptly to communications from the debtor. Response generally will be within 20 days of receipt of communication from the debtor.

(c) Subsequent demand letters also will advise the debtor of any interest, penalty or administrative costs which have been assessed and will advise the debtor that the debt may be referred to